

THE INDIAN DRUM

By William MacHarg and Edwin Balmer

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CHAPTER XVII

Mr. Spearman Goes North.

The message, in blurred lettering and upon the flimsy tissue paper of a carbon copy—that message which had brought tension to the offices of Corvet, Sherrill and Spearman and had called Constance Sherrill and her mother downtown where further information could be more quickly obtained—was handed to Constance by a clerk as soon as she entered her father's office. She read it; it already had been repeated to her over the telephone.

"4:05 a. m. Frankfort Wireless station has received following message from Number 25: 'We have Benjamin Corvet, of Chicago, aboard.'"

"You've received nothing later than this?" she asked.

"Nothing regarding Mr. Corvet, Miss Sherrill," the clerk replied.

"The crew?"

"Yes; we have just got the names of the crew." He took another carbon sheet from among the papers and handed it to her, and she looked swiftly down the list of names until she found that of Alan Conrad.

Her eyes filled, blinding her, as she put the paper down, and began to take off her things. She had been clinging desperately to the thought that the belief that Alan might not have been aboard the ferry, Alan's message, which had sent her father north to meet the ship, had implied nothing but that some one whom Alan loved might be Uncle Benny's message, Number 25; she had been fighting, those last few hours, against conviction that therefore Alan must be on the ferry, too.

She stood by the desk, as the clerk went out, looking through the papers which he had left with her. What she was reading was the carbon of the report prepared that morning and sent, at his request, to Henry, who was not yet down.

The last message read: "3:40, Petoskey is calling Manitowoc. Signals from Number 25, after becoming indistinct, failed entirely about 3:45, probably by failure of ship's power to supply current. Operator appears to have remained at key. From 3:25 to 3:45 we received disconnected messages as follows: 'Have cleared another car . . . they are sticking to it down there . . . engine room crew is also sticking . . . hell on car deck . . . everything smashed . . . they won't give up . . . sinking now . . . we're going . . . good-by . . . stuck to end . . . all they could . . . know that . . . hand it to them . . . have cleared another car . . . sink . . . S. O. . . Signals then entirely ceased.'"

Constance had not realized, until the reports of the wireless messages told her that he was gone, what companionship with Alan had come to mean to her. She had accepted it as always to be existent, somehow—a companionship which might be interrupted often but always to be formed again. It amazed her to find how firm a place he had found in her world of those close to her with whom she must always be intimately concerned.

The telephone switchboard beside Constance suddenly buzzed, and the operator, plugging in a connection, said: "Yes, sir; at once," and through the partitions of the private office on the other side, a man's heavy tones came to Constance. That was Henry's office, and in a moment, the voice was his, but it was so strange in other characteristics of expression that she waited an instant before saying to the clerk, "Mr. Spearman has come in?"

The clerk hesitated, but the continuance of the tone from the other side of the partition made reply superfluous. "Yes, Miss Sherrill."

Constance went to Henry's door and rapped. He made no answer and no move to open the door; so, after waiting a moment, she turned the knob and went in.

Henry was seated at his desk, facing her, his big hands before him; one of them held the telephone receiver. He lifted it slowly and put it upon the hook beside the transmitter as he watched her with steady, silent, aggressive scrutiny. He did not rise; only after a moment he recollected that he had not done so and came to his feet. "Good morning, Connie," he said. "Come in. What's the news?"

The impulse which had brought her into his office went from her. She had not seen nor heard from Henry directly since before Alan's telegram had come late yesterday afternoon; she had heard from her father only that he had informed Henry; that was all. "I've no news, Henry," she said. "Have you?" She closed the door behind her, moving closer to him.

"How did you happen to be here, Connie?" he asked.

She made no reply but gazed at him, studying him. The agitation which he was trying to conceal was not entirely consequent to her coming in upon him; it had been ruling him before. It had underlain the loudness and abuse of his words which she had overheard. That was no capricious outburst of temper or irritation; it had come from something which had seized and held him in suspense, in dread—in dread; there was no other way to define her

impression to herself. When she had opened the door and come in, he had looked up in dread, as though preparing himself for whatever she might announce. Now that the door shut them in alone, he approached her with arms outstretched. She stepped back, instinctively avoiding his embrace; and he stopped at once, but he had come quite close to her now.

As she stared at him, the clerk's voice came to her suddenly over the partition which separated the office from the larger room where the clerk was receiving some message over the telephone.

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"The crew?"

"The steamer Number 25 ran into proved to have been the Benton," he told her. "The men are all from her. They had abandoned her in the small boats, and the Solwerk picked them up before the ferry found her."

He was not asking her to congratulate him upon the relief he felt; he had not so far forgotten himself as that. But it was plain to her that he was congratulating himself; it had been fear that he was feeling before—fear, she was beginning to understand, that those on the ferry had been saved.

Horror and amazement flowed in upon her with her realization of this in the man she had promised to marry. For an instant she stared at him, all her body tense; then, as she turned and went out, he followed her, calling her name. But, seeing the women in the larger office, he stopped, and she understood he was not willing to urge himself upon her in her presence.

"I'm willing to go home now, mother, if you wish," she said steadily.

When they had gone down to the street and were in the car, Constance leaned back, closing her eyes; she feared her mother might wish to talk with her.

Toward three o'clock, the office called her, but only to report that they had heard from Mr. Sherrill. He had wired that he was going on from Manitowoc and would cross the straits from St. Ignace, messages from him were to be addressed to Petoskey. There was no other report except that vessels were still continuing the search for survivors, because the Indian Drum, which had been beating, was beating "short," causing the superstitious to be certain that, though some of the men from Number 25 were lost, some yet survived.

Constance thrilled as she heard that. She did not believe in the Drum; at least she had never thought she had really believed in it; she had only stirred to the idea of its being true. But if the Drum was beating, she was glad it was beating short. It was serving, at least, to keep the lake men more alert.

A little later, as Constance stood at the window, gazing out at the snow upon the lake she drew back suddenly out of sight from the street, as she saw Henry's roomster appear out of the storm and stop before the house.

She waited in the room where she was. The strain he was under had not lessened, she could see; or rather, if she could trust her feeling at sight of him, it had lessened only slightly, and at the same time his power to resist it had been lessening too.

"I thought you'd want to know, Connie," he said. "So I came straight out. The Richardson's picked up one of the boats of the ferry."

"Uncle Benny and Alan Conrad were not in it," she returned; the triumph she had seen in him had told her that.

"No; it was the first boat put off by the ferry, with the passengers and cabin maid and some injured men of the crew."

"Were they—alive?" her voice husked tensely.

"Yes; that is, they were able to revive them all, but it didn't seem possible to the Richardson's officers that

"What is it, Henry?"

His muscular reaction, as he read, had drawn the sheet away from her; he recovered himself almost instantly and gave the paper to her.

"3:35 a. m. Manitowoc, Wis., she read. 'The schooner Anna S. Solwerk has been sighted making for this port. She is not close enough for communication, but two lifeboats, additional to her own, can be plainly made out. It is believed that she must have picked up survivors of No. 25. She carries no wireless, so is unable to report. Tugs are going to her.'"

"Two lifeboats?" Constance cried. "That could mean that they all are saved or nearly all; doesn't it, Henry; doesn't it?"

He had read some other significance in it, she thought, or, from his greater understanding of conditions in the storm, he had been able to hold no hope from what had been reported. That was the only way she could explain to herself as he replied to her; that the word meant to him that men were saved and that therefore it was dismaying to him, could not come to her at once. When it came now, it went over her first only in the flash of incredulous question.

The telephone buzzed under his desk sounded; she drew close as he took up his receiver.

"Manitowoc?" he said. "I want to know what you've heard from the Solwerk. . . . You hear me? . . . The men the Solwerk picked up. You have the names yet?"

"The Benton?"

"Oh, I understand! All from the Benton. I see! . . . No; never mind their names. How about Number 25? Nothing more heard from them?"

Constance had caught his shoulder while he was speaking and now clung to it. Release—release of strain was going through him; she could feel it, and she heard it in his tones and saw it in his eyes.

She saw Henry stiffen. "Yes," she said swiftly. "They say the Drum be-

gan sounding last night, and that at first it sounded for only two lives; it's kept on beating, but still is beating only for four. There were thirty-nine on the ferry—seven passengers and thirty-two crew. Twelve have been saved now; so until the Drum raises two boats to twenty-seven there is still a chance that someone will be saved."

Constance watched him with wonder at the effect of what she had told. The news of the Drum had shaken him from his triumph over Alan and Uncle Benny and over her. It had shaken him so that, though he remained with her some minutes more, he seemed to have forgotten the purpose of reconciliation with her which had brought him to the house.

She dined, or made pretence of dining, with her mother at seven. Her mother's voice went on and on about trifles, and Constance did not try to pay attention. Her thought was following Henry with ever-sharpening apprehension. She called the office in the evening; it would be open, she knew, for messages regarding Uncle Benny and Alan would be expected there. A clerk answered; no other news had been received; she then asked Henry's whereabouts.

Mr. Spearman went north late this afternoon, Miss Sherrill, the clerk informed her.

"North? Where?"

"We are to communicate with him this evening to Grand Rapids; after that, to Petoskey."

Constance could hear her own heart beat. Why had Henry gone, she wondered; not, certainly, to aid the search. He had come to—under it?

CHAPTER XVIII

The Watch Upon the Beach.

Constance was throbbing with determination and action, as she found her purse and counted the money in it. She never in her life had gone alone upon an extended journey, much less been alone upon a train overnight. If she spoke of such a thing now, she would be prevented; no occasion for it would be recognized; she would not be allowed to go, even if "properly accompanied." She could not, therefore, risk taking a handbag from the house, so she thrust nightdress and toilet articles into her muff and the roomy pocket of her fur coat. She descended to the side door of the house, gained the street and turned westward at the first corner to a street car which would take her to the railway station.

The manner of buying a railway ticket and of engaging a berth were unknown to her—there had been servants always to do these things—but she watched others and did as they did. She procured a telegraph blank and wrote a message to her mother, telling her that she had gone north to join her father. When the train had started, she gave the message to the porter, directing him to send it from the first large town at which they stopped.

Constance could not, as yet, place Henry's part in the strange circumstances which had begun to reveal themselves with Alan's coming to Chicago; but Henry's hope that Uncle Benny and Alan were dead was beginning to make that clearer. She lay without voluntary movement in her berth, but her bosom was shaking with the thoughts which came to her.

Twenty years before, some dreadful event had altered Uncle Benny's life; his wife had known—or had learned—enough of that event so that she had left him. It had seemed to Constance and her father, therefore, that it must have been some intimate and private event.

Uncle Benny had withdrawn himself from men; he had ceased to be active in his business and delegated it to others. This change had been strangely advantageous to Henry. Henry had been hardly more than a common seaman then. He had been a mate—the mate on one of Uncle Benny's ships. Quite suddenly, he had become Uncle Benny's partner. Henry had explained this to her by saying that Uncle Benny had not trusted him; he had been suspicious of him. How strange, then, that Uncle Benny should have advanced and given way to a man whom he could not trust!

Uncle Benny had come to her and warned her not to marry Henry; then he had sent for Alan. There had been purpose in these acts of Uncle Benny's; had they meant that Uncle Benny had been on the verge of making explanation—that explanation which Henry feared—and that he had been prevented? Her father had thought this; at least, he had thought that Uncle Benny must have left some explanation in his house. He had told Alan that, and had given Alan the key to the house so that he could find it. Alan had gone to the house—

In the house Alan had found someone who had mistaken him for a ghost, a man who had cried out at sight of him something about a ship—about the Miwaka, the ship of whose loss no one had known anything except by the soundings of the Drum. What had the man been doing in the house? Had he too been looking for the explanation—the explanation that

Henry feared? Alan had described the man to her; that description had not had meaning for her before; but now remembering that description she could think of Henry as the only one who could have been in that house! Henry had fought with Alan there! Afterwards, when Alan had been attacked upon the street, had Henry anything to do with that?

Henry had lied to her about being in Duluth the night he had fought with Alan; he had not told her the true cause of his quarrel with Uncle Benny; he had wished her to believe that Uncle Benny was dead when the wedding ring and watch came to her—the watch which had been Captain Stafford's of the Miwaka! Henry had urged her to marry him at once. Was that because he wished the security that her father—and she—must give her husband when they learned the revelation which Alan or Uncle Benny might bring?

At Petoskey she went from the train directly to the telegraph office. If Henry was in Petoskey, they would know at that office where he could be found; he would be keeping in touch with them.

Mr. Spearman, the operator said, had been at the office early in the day; there had been no message for him; he had left instructions that any which came were to be forwarded to him through the men who, under his direction, were patrolling the shore for twenty miles north of Little Traverse, watching for boats.

Constance crossed the frozen edges of the bay by sledge to Harbor Point. Her distrust now had deepened to terrible dread. She had not been able before this to form any definite idea of how Henry could threat-



"Who's Here?" She Cried. "Who's Here?"

en Alan and Uncle Benny; she had imagined only vague interference and obstruction of the search for them; she had not foreseen that he could so readily assume charge of the search and direct, or misdirect, it.

At the Point she discharged the sledge and went on foot to the house of the caretaker who had charge of the Sherrill cottage during the winter. Getting the keys from him, she let herself into the house. Going to her room, she unpacked a heavy sweater and woolen cap and short fur coat—winter things which were left there against use when they opened the house sometimes out of season—and put them on. Then she went down and found her snowshoes. Stopping at the telephone, she called long distance and asked them to locate Mr. Sherrill, if possible, and instruct him to move south along the shore with whoever he had with him. She went out then, and fastened on her snowshoes.

Constance hurried westward and then north, following the bend of the shore. The figure of a man—one of the shore patrols—pacing the ice hummocks of the beach and staring out upon the lake, appeared vaguely in the dusk when she had gone about two miles. She came, three quarters of a mile farther on, to a second man; about an equal distance beyond she found a third, but passed him and went on.

Her legs ached now with the unaccustomed travel upon snowshoes; the cold, which had been only a piercing chill at first, was stopping feeling, almost stopping thought. She was horrified to find that she was growing weak and that her senses were becoming confused. She had come, in all, perhaps eight miles; and she was "playing out." She descended to the beach again and went on; her gaze continued to search the lake, but now, wherever there was a break in the bluffs, she looked toward the shore as well. At the third of these breaks, the yellow glow of a window appeared, marking a house in a hollow between snow-shrouded hills. She turned eagerly that way; she could go only very slowly now. There was no path; at least, if there was, the snow drifts hid it.

She struggled to the door and knocked upon it, and receiving no reply, she beat upon it with both fists. "Who's here?" she cried. "Who's here?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Right Word. Taxes are "imposed" and they are generally considered an imposition. —Boston Transcript.

The Boaster. The man who boasts is walking backward toward the verge of a precipice. —Acheson Globe.

WORKING GIRLS LOOK HERE

Read What Mrs. Lucas Writes Concerning Her Troubles, Which May be Just Like Yours

St. Louis, Mo.—"I had troubles that all women are apt to have, with pains in my back, weak, tired, nervous feelings and a weak stomach. I had been this way about a year and was unable to work or stand on my feet for any length of time. My husband's aunt told me how much good Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound had done her and begged me to try it, so I did. All my pains and weaknesses are gone, my stomach is all right and I do my work at home and also work for Swift's Packing Company. I recommend your Vegetable Compound to my friends and you may publish my letter as a testimonial."—Mrs. LULU LUCAS, 719A Vandeventer St., St. Louis, Mo.

Again and again one woman tells another of the merit of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

You who work must keep yourself strong and well. You can't work if you are suffering from such troubles. Mrs. Lucas couldn't. She tried our Vegetable Compound and her letter tells you what it did for her. Give Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound a fair trial now.



Cutting Off the Last Word. Archaeologists have recently been puzzled over the finding of the headless body of an Egyptian princess in an ancient tomb. It seems that the queen, as well as the king, had her head cut off. In certain Oriental countries it is customary for the head of the house, in the event of a domestic argument, to behead the lady, thus cutting the lady as well as the argument short. Inventions, the last word that issued from the lips of the headless princess were: "Where have you been?"—Judge.

The Cuticura Toilet Ties. Having cleared your skin keep it clear by making Cuticura your every-day toilet preparations. The Soap to cleanse and purify, the Ointment to soothe and heal, the Talcum to powder and perfume. No toilet table is complete without them.—Advertisement.

More Artistic. "Dearest," he said, sighing like a furnace. "It doesn't seem like the same old smile you used to give to me." "Oh, no, Jack," replied the sweet thing. "This is a new one. I have been studying at a school of dramatic art." —Florida Times-Union.

The people who can do everything in a pinch ought to be pinched more often.

Help That Aching Back! Is your back giving out? Are you tormented with backache and stabbing pains? These aches often leave you all played out? Feel you just can't keep going? Likely your kidneys are to blame. Overwork, strains, hurry and worry tend to weaken the kidneys. Backache is often the first warning. Headaches and dizziness may come, too, and annoying bladder irregularities. Help the kidneys with Doan's Kidney Pills—the remedy recommended by thousands. Ask your neighbor!

An Illinois Case J. B. Fisher, retired farmer, No. 8, King St., Robinson, Ill., says: "I was greatly troubled by kidney complaint. My back ached and shooting pains caught me and my back pained. I couldn't straighten after bending. It was aches & frequently troubled me and dizziness would follow. My kidneys were weak, but Doan's Kidney Pills completely cured me."

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The National Remedy of Holland for over 200 years; it is an enemy of all pains resulting from kidney, liver and uric acid troubles. All druggists, three times. Look for the name Gold Medal on every box and accept no imitation.